

# New York Tribune

## Weekly Review of the Arts

### The Stage and Its People

Sketches by Jefferson Machamer



In "Secrets," Margaret Lawrence shows what isn't being worn this year as a rush hour subway riding habit.

## The Theaters

Warfield's Acting Is Great, Even if His Shylock Is Not

By Percy Hammond

THE Shakespearean professors seem to be of the opinion that Mr. Warfield's Shylock is everything that it should be, excepting that it is not "great." It is "a fine and studious" accomplishment, marked by an intelligent, rhythmic reading of the lines and much eloquent detail of pantomime and "business." It is a "satisfactory" Shylock, more credible than the traditional performances of the role—a characterization rather than an impersonation. It is also a "real" Shylock. But in the judgment of the pedagogues and others, it is not "great."

This disinclination to brevet Mr. Warfield with the highest rank among the Shylocks is explicable. He lacks the sweep, the stride, the boom and the stateliness regarded as essential to the big delineations. He is not tall and in his voice there are no majestic resonances. He dominates the scene, but he does not subjugate it. Therefore, though he is the most living of the Shylocks, he is not "great."

Most of us, perhaps, like a little splendor in our Shakespearean acting. In the larger roles we have a weakness for deep-bayed elocution, modified, of course, but still a bit ostentatious. Shylock must snarl and fawn and curse and suffer himself to be spat upon by cheap Christians in the Rialto. He must have a mean hatred for the sentimental Merchant who cuts rates in money-lending. He must scheme a despicable revenge for that and other annoyances. He must be a religious, vindictive bigot. His anguish concerning the loss of his ducats must be ridiculous. But ever all his cordiness and pettiness we demand a glamour of attitude and utterance not entirely consonant with his questionable soul. Mr. Warfield seems to us to blend the poetic reality with the legitimate buncombe. He does not straddle, though he is on both sides. One idea is that his acting is "great," but that his Shylock is not.

Mr. Warfield, as you know, has the gift of being subtly explicit, and he employs that engaging facility many times in his characterization. The transaction with the Christian Merchant and the thrifless Bassanio is a soft photograph of such a proceeding, with the sagacious usurer deftly putting it over on his less cunning customers. Shylock in this incident is usually an obvious murderer, and you wonder why his victims, though very ingenious, do not penetrate his dastardly designs. But Mr. Warfield is so artful in the negotiations that you feel that you yourself would borrow money from him, no matter what the bond. There are a few moments of pantomime in the trial scene that fascinated us. Portia, for the first time in any stage, we believe, stops the proceedings, and, ascending the dais, whispers mysteriously to the Duke of Venice. This gives Mr. Warfield a chance to do some of the craftiest of the histrionisms as he watches them with a mingling of hope and suspicion.

After the third act of the opening performance the excited drama lovers foregathered in the lobby and exchanged verdicts on Mr. Warfield's delivery of the speech beginning "Hath not a Jew eyes?" It was the impression of Augustus Thomas that never had he seen or heard so moving an exposition of the wrongs of the medieval Jew; and it was ours, also. Mr. Warfield is there both a great Shylock and a great actor. The words seemed to us to be not only Shakespeare's but Shylock's and Warfield's as well.

Since Mr. Belasco and Mr. Warfield have been kneeling before this shrine for twenty years, their attitude in the "production" is reverential. Mr. Belasco's acting version is compact and smooth of movement, introducing no bizarre innovations. It restores the scene inside Shylock's house omitted in other editions and there is a small detail or two illustrating the Belasco "touch." As, for instance, a silent monk who confronts Shylock with a crucifix as the beaten Jew leaves the court of justice. The scenery is less spectacular than that of Irving or Sothorn, but it is of a devout and unparalleled richness. Famous actors are cast prodigally in minor roles—Albert Bruning, for example, as Tubal and A. E. Asou as the Duke. Miss Mary Servoss troubled us considerably as Portia because she is so superscrupulous in her elocution and so undistinguished in her bearing. But she was ill on the first night and, as Mr. Belasco explained, she played bravely, despite bronchitis and a temperature. Mr. Ian MacLaren appears to be unnecessarily damp as Antonio and Mr. Philip Merivale, by the ingratiating of his personality, causes the mercenary Bassanio to be less obnoxious than he really is.

## Another Hecht Play for Dittrichstein

Ben Hecht is writing another play for Leo Dittrichstein, to be tried out on the Pacific Coast next June, and to succeed, if then proved fitting. "The Egotist," when this play shall have run its course. The new play is being written around the life of Benvenuto Cellini, the medieval sculptor and goldsmith, whose doughty exploits with arms and fair women have ranked him high among the Don Juans of authentic record.

This subject, broached by Dittrichstein to Hecht during the preliminary run of "The Egotist" in Chicago, so caught the enthusiasm of the young

novelist and dramatist that he began writing immediately, and within ten days of the initial conversation he walked into the La Salle Theater one morning with a completed first act, the second act at least roughly completed and the third act fully outlined. But there were differences of opinion, and Dittrichstein, who has been an omnivorous absorber of Cellini legend, advanced his ideas and technical suggestions with such persuasive authority that Hecht not only listened but gracefully, as well as wisely, decided to tear up the effort which might have crowned him the speed king of dramatists and started all over again.



Shylock returns from his hunt for Jessica looking for all the world like Diogenes exhausted by a luckless day. At right—Lorenzo awaits the coming of Jessica amidst a carnival setting.

If we had been Antonio there would have been no blood shed. Ours was frozen by this scene.

Antonio touching Shylock—Portia receives Shylock's blessing.

Some hurriedly drawn thumbnail (did you ever try drawing with your thumbnail?) sketches of the "Merchant of Venice," starring David Warfield as Shylock.

## Every Man in His Own Humor

Rebellion in Boston

EARL SIR: An article, appearing recently in The Tribune, telling of the bad fortune on the road of many of the so-called better plays, which have had financial success in New York, has caused considerable interest here in Boston. Possibly you may care to print a few lines which, I think, tersely explain the situation here.

"Straight" or "legitimate" plays are doing bad business here in Boston for two reasons. First, the productions are poor. Second rate casts are being sent to Boston. In the case of "He Who Gets Slapped," to which you refer, only one of the New York cast came to Boston, where a decidedly poor performance was given. In the case of "The Czarina," only one member of the New York cast came to Boston. The acting in this play was even worse than in "He." Bostonians are not barbarians; they will not patronize second-rate productions.

The other cause of poor business here is the high prices charged. Boston will not pay \$2 and \$1.50 to sit in the balcony to see "The Dover Road"—never again. Outside of the top galleries there are no theater seats in Boston less than \$1 and in some cases \$1.50 or \$2. The great middle class will not sit in the first balcony at any such ridiculous charges.

Motion picture theaters, convenient, beautifully maintained, are offering their wares at 25 cents and 50 cents. Managers of the regular theaters must compete. They can if they will. Plays that play to exorbitant prices go on the road within a few miles of Boston, cast and production intact, and charge about half prices. "Liliom" plays in Boston at \$2.50 Saturday matinee and then goes over to Springfield and plays a Saturday matinee at orchestra \$1 and \$1.50. Springfield people coming into Boston will not patronize the Boston theaters, and Bostonians reading the Springfield advertisements are justly indignant at the prices charged in the "one town."

Offer good plays, Mr. Manager, at fair prices and Boston, like a hundred other cities, will desert the movies and give you the patronage you deserve.

HENRY S. LEWISTON.

Boston, Mass.

## New Year's Theatrical Offerings

"WILL SHAKESPEARE"—Clemence Dane's play will be presented for the first time in America by Winthrop Ames to-morrow night at the National Theater. The play takes up the poet at the age of twenty in Stratford, just after his marriage to Anne Hathaway, and details his break with home, wife and native city to try his aspiring wings in London. There, ten years later, his life and destiny become closely interwoven with those of Mary Fitton, a lady in waiting at the court and the "Dark Lady" of the sonnets; of Queen Elizabeth and of England. The man is pictured in his youth—adventuring, loving, struggling and finally achieving a part of his vision. Otto Kruger will play young Shakespeare, Katherine Cornell will be seen as Mary Fitton, Winifred Lenihan will appear as Anne Hathaway, Haidee Wright, who played Queen Elizabeth in the London production, will portray the same character here. John L. Shine will be Henslowe, Allan Birmingham "Kit" Marlowe and Angela Ogden Mrs. Hathaway. Norman-Bel Geddes designed the settings for the six scenes and Drems Taylor composed the special songs which are introduced.

"CHAUVES-BOURS"—Nikita Blieff will celebrate the four hundredth performance of his organization here next Thursday night with the presentation of the fourth and final program in this country at the Century Roof Theater. The premiere will also serve to welcome Constantin Stanislavsky and his fellow artists of the Moscow Art Theater, who will arrive the preceding day, and who will begin their engagement under Blieff's own sponsor, Morris Gest, on Monday, January 8, at Jolson's Fifty-ninth Street Theater. Stanislavsky and his players will be guests of honor at the opening. In addition to fresh novelties from the "Chauve-Souris" repertoire, Blieff will revive several of the most popular numbers of previous bills, one or two in their original form and the others with new songs, new steps and new scenery. There are also to be surprise numbers. The "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," which proved so popular when first presented last February, will be restored in its original form. When this new program ends its run Blieff and his company will return to Paris.

Juliet it has been nothing short of a hindrance to me! Artistically it was the realization of my choicest dream; financially it spelled ruin. Had it not been for the encouraging advice and interest of such men as Emanuel Reicher, Winchell Smith, B. Iden Payne, Richard Ordynski, Arthur Hornblow, Benjamin De Casseres and others I daresay I might have given up and gone "back to the ribbon counter."

In my youthful enthusiasm I had led myself to believe that an actress needed was to approach a manager, produce credentials of a praiseworthy Juliet performance (opposite so excellent an actor as Walter Hampden) and—well, the rest would be easy. But, alas! How often have I been coldly scanned by a manager and sent home with the weighty and consoling remark: "Well, this part doesn't require exactly a Juliet." So that soon I began to feel that Providence was not so merciless after all when it keeps most actresses yearning until they are "the proverbial fly" before it sends them the chance to play that greatest and loveliest of all roles.

However—thus in the past. Now a new day seems to have dawned, and

gets her big chance to play Juliet again—as she did with Mr. Walter Hampden—that lady ought to salute the Dramatic Editor of The Tribune.

ARTHUR SHAW.

## Suggests a Juliet Quartet

Dear Sir: I have just discovered that in my letter of the 17th answering Mr. Charles Phineas Davis's letter I was mistaken. There is a Bertha Broad who played Juliet with Hampden. The only thing I am sorry for is that I have not seen Miss Broad play Juliet, as I have tried to see as many different actresses play the part as I could. Well, the more the merrier. We are to have two more Julietes, why not two young Julietes? I back up the statement I made of Miss Maude's Juliet and I certainly apologize if I have offended Miss Broad in any way, but I certainly understood that when Mr. Hampden did "Romeo and Juliet" on March 29, 1920, that it was his first performance of "Romeo." I am sorry for my mistake, but competition is the life of art as well as trade.

Come on, ye managers, one and all—one for Beatrice Maude and one for Bertha Broad! SYLVIA HOLMES.

64 West Thirty-sixth Street, New York.

## Circumventing the Speculator

Dear Sir: I see by the paper this morning that you have joined the great majority, which is all set up over this here ticket speculating business.

I have a scheme to beat that game. It is a sure thing, warranted to put every ticket speculator out of business and keep him out forever and ever, world without end, Amen!

You say ticket speculators clean up \$1,000 a week by this method of separating easy marks from their money. Now, there are 50,000 speculators, or maybe it's 500,000, in New York; that makes at least \$50,000,000 a week. Multiply that by fifty-two weeks and you have \$2,600,000,000 a year!

Mr. Hammond, we can take that away from the speculators as easy as anything. I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll furnish the idea if you will put it over. Then we'll split the two billions 50-50 and give the \$500,000,000 to charity.

Do you know any easier way to make a billion dollars? And think of the hearts made happy by that \$500,000,000 in charity! What do you say?

Yours in an agony of suspense, CHARLES FREDERICK CARTER.



Ethel Barrymore appearing as Juliet in the Arthur Hopkins production of "Romeo and Juliet."

## The Playbill

A Bulletin of Who's Who and What's What

By Beauvais Fox

LOWELL SHERMAN, now the wicked, well-whiskered Baron Tolento in "The Masked Woman" at the Eltinge Theater, is the next actor who will reach stardom under the directing hand of AL WOODS. When the French adaptation runs its course, Mr. Woods will begin preparations for the presentation of Mr. Sherman in EDWARD KNOBLOCK'S "The Divine Spark." It is an EDGAR ALLAN POE play, is "The Divine Spark" and the star, of course, will play the part of the poet. Mr. Woods says that the play is in eighteen scenes. But Poe will not die in Baltimore. "No," said Mr. Woods, flicking the ash from his Corona, "I wouldn't have any one die in Baltimore." "The Raven" figures in the Knoblock opus. Visitors are urging the producer to hasten over to the Hippodrome to engage JOCKO, the crow of "Better Times" for the feathered role.

Seldom has a new production offered Broadway's spontaneous humorists more opportunities for their quips than has the Selwyn's introduction of "Johannes Kreisler," the spectacular forty-one scene novelty imported from Berlin. "One man, somewhat dubious regarding the chances of the production, exclaimed: 'At last, a production that even Cain will not be able to move in one load!' Cain is the proprietor of the storage house where repose the hopes and scenery of many New York producers. Another, more hopeful, regretted that he had not reserved for himself the greasing privileges for the numerous steel tracks on the Apollo's stage over which the scenery for the six stages is shunted into place."

Mr. Woods was discussing the coming visit of the MOSCOW ART THEATER. "I wonder how MORRIS GEST will be able to be in two places at once when they open. Who'll replace him in 'Johannes Kreisler'? In the make-up he affects BEN-AMIS' resemblance to Gest is marked. . . . Molnar's comedy, 'Fashions for Men,' moves uptown to-morrow afternoon, from the National Theater to the Belmont, there to continue its engagement."

CRANE WILBUR has written a new play which he calls "Cherry." SUZANNE CAUBERT, who is now touring in Mr. Wilbur's "The Monster," will be featured in "Cherry." . . . MARJORIE RAMBAUER's apparition as Rosalind is deferred, it appears, for she is to take "The Goldfish" to Boston for a run. . . . "Diana Comes to Town," the music-dramatic version of "Lonely Wives," comes to life to-morrow in Brooklyn, where it will begin its tryout week at Teller's Shubert.

PAULINE FREDERICK, who played in Philadelphia in "The Guilty One" last week, is expected to reach Broadway in three or four weeks. . . . Another important production which will soon arrive is "Humoresque" with LAURETTE TAYLOR in the leading role. . . . "The First Year" is not doing as well in Chicago as it did during its long run here. It has been dropping steadily in the Western metropolises. . . . The theater on the roof of the New Amsterdam will be ready to receive its first production in about two weeks. . . . HAROLD LLOYD has just turned down an offer to leave the screen and to appear on the legitimate stage. While he was making "Dr. Jack," the comedy in which he appears at the Strand for a second week beginning to-day, the Selwyns sought the comedian for a play which EDGAR SELWYN had written, but Lloyd declined just as he has declined requests for personal appearances during the past three years. He believes that people should know him only as a screen character. . . . "Enemies," a five-act play by MIKHAIL ARTZYBASHEFF, is scheduled for production simultaneously in Berlin and Vienna next month. IDA ROLAND has been chosen for the leading role. A New York producing firm is said to be negotiating for the rights to his "Jealousy." . . . LEO CARILLO will open the new Bard of Avon Theater, Poughkeepsie, to-morrow with two performances of OLIVIER MOROS-CO'S production of EDWARD LOCKES' "Mike Angelo." Mr. Carillo will open in the play here at the Morocco Theater on January 5th. . . . Plans

There will be plenty of New Year's Eve entertainments available for those who desire to see the old year out in the theater. All Keith theaters will give three performances to-day, the last show starting at 10:30, with the exception of the Palace and the New Amsterdam, where the performances will start at 11. Edgar Allan Woolf has written an afterpiece for the Palace artists and Elsie Janis one for those at the New Amsterdam. Miss Janis will appear at the three shows at the latter theater. Special New Year's Eve performances will be given at the Century, Shubert and Casino theaters. In addition, the Winter Garden concert will take place at the Ambassador Theater. At the Central Theater, where Gertrude Hoffman is in "Halls, Everybody" is the attraction, there will be two performances, the first at 7:30 and the second at 11. There will also be a special performance at the Provincetown Playhouse.

Paul Cremonesi will present the Royal Italian Variety Artists at the Frazee Theater this afternoon and evening.

Burton Holmes will give five Sunday evening and five Monday afternoon lectures, beginning January 7. He will present five subjects. They are "Feking," "Yangtze Kiang," "Unfamiliar Japan," "Manchuria" and "East of Suez."

Old Bill, now out of the trenches, wearing a frock coat and a top hat, but with the same straggly mustache, is back. In a new setting he has come on the stage again, making his first appearance at His Majesty's Theater, Montreal, the past week, under the chaperonage of Sam H. Harris, who makes the production of the new Bajmefather play, "S. Morgan Powell, writing for 'The Montreal Star,' says of it:

"Old Bill, M. P." is a good entertainment and well presented. Since we last met him he has obtained work in a coal mine and finds himself the leader of the Moderates in a strike mood. He is used to run for Parliament, does so, and finally wins the voters to his side by appearing in his service uniform, and reminding them of the dead and what they owed for. There lies behind comedy and chills a propaganda as sound and as healthy as any ever advanced. Mr. Bajmefather has done clever work, and has given us an entertainment of absorbing interest."